

SB 461 Testimony
Senate Natural Resources Committee
February 18, 2009
Clint Jacobs, Manager
Dry Prairie Rural Water

Chairman Gebhardt, Members of the Committee

My name is Clint Jacobs, and I am the Manager of the Dry Prairie Regional Water System

Regional Water Systems are relatively new to Montana while other states have been installing these systems for decades.

The map presented displays the present regional systems in Montana. The Ft Peck/Dry Prairie and Rocky Boys/North Central systems are authorized by Congress and under construction. The Dry Red Water and Central Montana systems are seeking authorization from Congress.

The benefit of regional water systems is to utilize one central source and treatment facility and distribute the water through thousands of miles of pipeline to serve towns and farms and ranches within a regional area.

The present planned regional systems in Montana represent 25% of the geographical area of Montana. In the decades to come the entire State will be served by regional systems. Presently the Towns and Froid, Medicine Lake and Bainville and 250 farms and ranches are being served by the Dry Prairie System.

Regional Water Systems are constructed in segments as money is made available. Dry Prairie anticipates that 30 construction segments will be required to complete the entire system with one or two segments being built per year. In the case of Dry Prairie and other regional systems in the Dakotas it is common to use interim sources of water in the early stages of the project to address immediate needs. Dry Prairie has just secured its second interim source from the Boeing Company who owns the old Glasgow Air Force Base. With that source Dry Prairie will build about 100 miles of pipeline this summer and connect the Town of Nashua and about 200 farms and ranches, some of which are livestock taps.

With this background, Dry Prairie and the other regional systems support SB 461. The bill will allow Regional Systems to extend their pipeline and service areas without a formal change of place of use process, which requires a 6 to 9 months time period. Such delays can hamper the timing of construction starts within a limited construction season. In addition, the project may not be able to obligate the federal funds which are limited and awarded in a highly competitive environment. Further, such delays may require farms and ranches to drill additional farmstead and pasture wells when regional systems are unable to meet the immediate needs of those residents.

I urge your support of SB 461 and am available for questions.